AMSAT News Service Weekly Bulletins
Issue: ANS-330
Date: 2006-11-26
Sources: amsat-ans-2006-ans-330-weekly.txt

AMSAT NEWS SERVICE
ANS-330

ANS is a free, weekly, news and information service of AMSAT North America, The Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation. ANS reports on the activities of a worldwide group of Amateur Radio operators who share an active interest in designing, building, launching and communicating through analog and digital Amateur Radio satellites.

Please send any amateur satellite news or reports to:

ans-editor@amsat.org

In this edition:
* Unique Donation Opportunity Through The Pension Protection Act
* AMSAT at the Tampa Hamfest
* OSCAR-11 Report 20 November 2006
* ARISS Status - 20 November 2006

SB SAT @ AMSAT $ANS-330.01
Unique Donation Opportunity Through The Pension Protection Act

AMSAT News Service Bulletin 330.01
 From AMSAT HQ SILVER SPRING, MD.
November 26, 2006
To All RADIO AMATEURS
BID: $ANS-330.01

Recent legislation passed by Congress and signed by President Bush can help AMSAT raise the funds needed to build Eagle. The law, called the Pension Protection Act (PPA), includes
a provision enabling AMSAT to raise substantially more money than might have been previously possible. However, time is short to take full advantage of this unique opportunity.

Serious construction work must be funded this year to have Eagle ready to orbit by the target of 2009.

Basically, here's the story on how the new law can help Eagle fly!

The PPA provides that U.S. taxpayers with IRAs who have reached the age of 70-1/2, may contribute to qualified charities, part or all (up to $100,000 per year or $200,000 for married couples filing jointly), of the money they must annually withdraw from their IRAs.

Thus, many AMSAT members and other supporters of the amateur radio space program have a marvelous opportunity to keep the Eagle project on track.

If you must withdraw a certain amount from your IRA each year, there is a big advantage to making such withdrawals as direct contributions to AMSAT rather than merely receiving the distributions and then contributing in the usual manner. Under PPA, the amount you contribute directly is NOT counted as income and thus may put you into a lower tax bracket. It may also reduce the percentage of your Social Security income subject to taxation.

Key provisions of the new legislation to keep in mind:

1. Donors must hold either a conventional or Roth IRA.

2. Donors must be at least 70-1/2 years of age.

3. Contributions must be made directly from the IRA to the charitable organization not to a donor- advised fund, private foundation, gift annuity or trust.

4. Donations may be made this year and next only, and must be made by December 31, 2006 and December 31, 2007.

5. The maximum amount a contributor may donate each year is $100,000.

6. Direct contributions to qualified charities from IRAs, in accordance with the PPA provisions, are NOT counted as taxable income.

If you are 70-1/2 or older and have an IRA, you are in a position to take advantage of this potential windfall for the Eagle project. AMSAT urges you to first check with your tax advisor for specifics regarding your individual situation, then ask your IRA custodian to transfer to AMSAT part or all of what you are required to withdraw. Be sure to have this transfer completed before December 31st.

Let's all of us do our part to get Eagle into orbit.

* Have your IRA custodian call the AMSAT office to get information on how to transfer your contribution. The number 301-589-6062. Office hours are 10 AM to 6 PM EST.

[ANS thanks BIll, W3XO, for the above information]

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SB SAT @ AMSAT $ANS-330.02
AMSAT at the Tampa Hamfest

AMSAT News Service Bulletin 330.02
 From AMSAT HQ SILVER SPRING, MD.
November 26, 2006
To All RADIO AMATEURS
BID: $ANS-330.02

The Tampa Bay Hamfest, which will be held this year over the weekend of 2-3 December, is the largest amateur radio trade show on Florida's west coast. AMSAT will be well represented at the hamfest with a booth, live satellite demonstrations and an expanded forum session.

The hamfest will be held at the Manatee Civic Center in Palmetto, which in located in the south Tampa Bay Area - about halfway between downtown St. Petersburg and downtown Sarasota.
Additional hamfest info is available at http://www.fgcarc.org/

[ANS thanks Lee, KU4OS, for the above information]

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SB SAT @ AMSAT $ANS-330.03
OSCAR-11 Report 20 November 2006

AMSAT News Service Bulletin 330.03
 From AMSAT HQ SILVER SPRING, MD.
November 26, 2006
To All RADIO AMATEURS

BID: $ANS-330.03

During the period 30 October to 20 November, the satellite was heard from 07 to 17 November. Good signals steady signals have beeen heard on all passes, and excellent copy of telemetry obtained.

The date/time stamp has been of interest. Since the satellite was heard on 18 October the on-board clock has maintained accurate time, to within two seconds over a period of 30 days. This compares with the average gain of five seconds per month, recorded when the satellite was fully operational.

The date counter appears to be incrementing correctly, but the day of the month is not reset to one, at the end of each month, and is not incrementing the month counter correctly. During the OFF period the month counter changed from '0=' to '10'. On 17 November the date was shown as 51 October. However, the day of the week counter appears to be incrementing correctly.

If the satellite watchdog timer continues to operate normally, the beacon should switch ON around 29 November. If the satellite is not heard around this time, it may be worth listening around 09 December.

I am indebted to Peter ZL3TC, for his reports, which helped me determine when the satellite last switched ON. Many thanks.

The current status of the satellite, is that all the analogue telemetry channels, 0 to 59 are zero, ie they have failed. The status channels 60 to 67 were still working. The spacecraft computer and active attitude control system have switched OFF, ie. the satellite' attitude is controlled only by the passive gravity boom gradient, and the satellite is free to spin at any speed. When telemetry was last received it showed that one of the solar arrays had failed, and there was a large unexplained current drain on the main 14 volt bus. After 22 years in orbit the battery has undergone around 100,000 partial charge/discharge cycles, and observations suggest that it cannot power the satellite during eclipses, or sometimes during periods of poor solar attitude.

The watchdog timer now operates on a 20 day cycle. The ON/OFF times have tended to be very consistent. The average of many observations show this to be 20.7 days, ie. 10.3 days ON followed by 10.4 days OFF. However, poor solar attitude may result may result in a low 14 volt line supply, which may cause the beacon to switch OFF prematurely, and reset the watchdog timer cycle. When this occurs, the beacon is OFF for 20.7 days.

The Beacon frequencies are -

VHF 145.826 MHz. AFSK FM ASCII Telemetry

UHF 435.025 MHz. OFF

S-band 2401.5 MHz. OFF

Listeners to OSCAR-11 may be interested in visiting my website. If you need to know what OSCAR-11 should sound like, there is a short audio clip for you to hear. The website contains an archive of news & telemetry data. It also contains details about using a soundcard or hardware demodulators for data capture. There is software for capturing data, and decoding ASCII telemetry. The URL is www.users.zetnet.co.uk/clivew/

If you place this bulletin on a terrestrial packet network, please use the bulletin identifier $BID:U2RPT127.CWV, to prevent duplication.

73 Clive G3CWV xxxxx@amsat.org (please replace xxxxx by g3cwv)

[ANS thanks Clive, G3CWV, for the above information]

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SB SAT @ AMSAT $ANS-330.04
ARISS Status - 20 November 2006

AMSAT News Service Bulletin 330.04
 From AMSAT HQ SILVER SPRING, MD.
November 26, 2006
To All RADIO AMATEURS
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Astronaut Training Status

ESA astronaut Christer Fuglesang has been scheduled for an Amateur Radio training session on Monday, November 20. Fugelsang will fly on the Shuttle STS-116 mission scheduled to launch on December 7, and plans to participate in an ARISS contact during his flight.

[ANS thanks Carol, KB3LKI for the above information]

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In addition to regular membership, AMSAT offers membership in the President's Club. Members of the President's Club, as sustaining donors to AMSAT Project Funds, will be eligible to receive additional benefits. Application forms are available from the AMSAT Office.

73, This week's ANS Editor,
Lee McLamb, KU4OS